

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1975

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2700

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, SY, HU

SUBJECT: VISIT OF HUNGARIAN CHIEF OF STAFF

REF: DAO BUDAPEST 508 (NOTAL)

1. AL BAATH, BAATH PARTY NEWSPAPER (GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED), HAS REPORTED VISIT OF HUNGARIAN CHIEF OF STAFF, LT. GEN. ISTVAN OLAH. ARRIVAL DATE NOT MENTIONED BUT COVERAGE IN PRESS NOV 11, 12 AND 13 WOULD INDICATE ARRIVAL NOVEMBER 10 OR 11. PRESS SAYS OLAH CALLED ON DEFENSE MINISTER LT. GEN. TLAS, LT. GEN. HIKMAT SHIHABI (CHIEF OF STAFF), AND AIR FORCE COMMANDER LT. GEN. NAJI JAMIL. HE ALSO VISITED AIR COLLEGE AND CITY OF KUNEITRA (CITY CLAIMED BY SYRIANS TO HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY ISRAELI ARMY BEFORE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT). ARTICLE STATED PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR "EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON COMMON EXPERIENCES" AND FOR "CONSOLIDATION OF RESISTANCE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM." DELEGATIONS ALSO DISCUSSED RELATIONS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO ARMIES. NORMALLY DRAB PRESS GAVE NO ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

2. IN REMARKS COVERED BY PRESS, TLAS LAUDED GOOD RELATIONS WITH HUNGARY AND PRAISED HUNGARIAN POSITION DURING OCTOBER WAR AGAINST ZIONIST IMPERIALISM. OLAH WAS QUOTED AS
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AFFIRMING HUNGARY'S UNRESERVED SUPPORT OF ARABS UNTIL ZIONIST

AGRESSION IS ELIMINATED AND LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS RESTORED. HE SAID FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION ARE SYMBOLS OF GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND TOLD AIR FORCE COMMANDER AND GROUP OF SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS THAT "VICGORIES OF SYRIA ARE VICTORIES FOR HUNGARY, SINCE ENEMY OF ONE IS ENEMY OF OTHER."

3. COMMENT: DAMASCUS IS FOCAL POINT FOR STEADY STREAM OF DELEGATIONS - MILITARY, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL. THERE NOTHING, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THAT INDICATES THIS VISIT WAS BUT ANOTHER IN SERIES OF BASICALLY GOOD WILL VISITS CALCULATED TO SHOW CONTINUED WARMTH OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND SOCIALIST STATES OF EASTERN EUROPE AT TIME WHEN SARG IS OPENING DOORS TO WEST. EMBASSY WILL REPORT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OBTAINED REGARDING THIS VISIT BUT WE DOUBT MUCH MORE WILL COME OUR WAY.
MURPHY

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